

will be remembered by family members, friends and fellow Hoosiers as a true American hero, and we honor the sacrifice he made while dutifully serving his country.

As I search for words to do justice in honoring Kyle's sacrifice, I am reminded of President Lincoln's remarks as he addressed the families of the fallen soldiers in Gettysburg: "We cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." This statement is just as true today as it was nearly 150 years ago, as I am certain that the impact of Kyle's actions will live on far longer than any record of these words.

It is my sad duty to enter the name of Kyle Childress in the official record of the Senate for his service to this country and for his profound commitment to freedom, democracy, and peace. When I think about this just cause in which we are engaged, and the unfortunate pain that comes with the loss of our heroes, I hope that families like Kyle's can find comfort in the words of the prophet Isaiah who said, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."

May God grant strength and peace to those who mourn, and may God be with all of you, as I know He is with Kyle.

#### JOHNNY CARSON

Mr. NELSON of Nebraska. Mr. President, thank you for the opportunity to speak today about a fellow Nebraskan who not only gave back to his State, but gave much more in ways of laughter to all of America. I am speaking of Johnny Carson, beloved by his family and friends, cherished by fans, and respected by his fellow comedians. Johnny Carson was a man whose comedic talent always looked effortless, yet set the highest of standards for his performances. Mr. Carson passed away at the age of 79.

Mr. Carson took over the "Tonight Show" in 1962, and preferring to retire at the top of his game, voluntarily stepped down in 1992. For 30 years, Johnny Carson tucked Americans into their beds all the while making them laugh before they shut their eyes to sleep. Between 10 to 15 million people watched Johnny deliver his hilarious monologue each night.

Mr. Carson should be honored not only for all the laughter he brought to so many American homes, but also all that he brought to his hometown, Norfolk, NE. Johnny Carson was and will remain Nebraska's favorite native son. He always remembered his roots, and often made visits home to "give back" to his humble, rural community which he loved. There is no question that all of Norfolk loved him back. He was a

philanthropist, a father, a son and to most, a cherished nightly friend.

Mr. Carson shielded his political views as carefully as he did his private life, insisting that the only message of his show was entertainment. Johnny Carson is a man that could bring people together, regardless of political or religious affiliation, regardless of race or gender; he was a man of character. He will be remembered and recognized today and always as a man who gave his all and never forgot the few.

#### THE EXONERATED

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I normally do not do movie reviews, but for this Thursday's premiere of "The Exonerated" on CourtTV, I feel compelled to make an exception. "The Exonerated" tells the harrowing true stories of six innocent people who were convicted and sentenced to death.

Since February 2000, I have worked to prevent more innocents from meeting the same fate, and last year the Innocence Protection Act was finally passed and signed into law. The reforms it enacts will create a fairer system of justice, where the problems that have sent innocent people to death row are less likely to occur, where the American people can be more certain that violent criminals are caught and convicted instead of the innocent people who have been wrongly put behind bars for their crimes, and where victims and their families can be more certain of the accuracy, and finality, of the results.

The film of "The Exonerated" was adapted from a play of the same title by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen, which was performed last year at the Kennedy Center. Those who were unable to see the play will have the chance to watch the movie on CourtTV this Thursday, January 27, at 9 p.m.

Since 1973, some 117 innocent people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. Six of these stories are told in "The Exonerated." While the Innocence Protection Act passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and Senate, the task before us remains getting the new law funded. Watching these true-life accounts will help explain why funding the Innocence Protection Act should be a high priority that Congress and the administration must not ignore.

#### VOTING OPPORTUNITY AND TECHNOLOGY ENHANCEMENT RIGHTS ACT OF 2005 (VOTER ACT)

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, as we approach the historic elections in Iraq this week, it is important that we pause and take stock of our own elections process here in the United States. There is already much we can learn from the Iraqi experiment in democracy that can broaden and strengthen the participation of our own citizens in their democracy here in America. And

in light of the continuing barriers that American citizens found at polling places across this Nation last November, we cannot rest on the laurels of past legislation. We must continue to strive to provide an equal opportunity for all citizens to participate in their democracy by voting and having their vote counted.

For that reason, on Monday, I was pleased to introduce S. 17, the Voting Opportunity and Technology Enhancement Rights Act of 2005—the VOTER Act. I am grateful to the Democratic Leader, HARRY REID, for including this comprehensive initiative in his leadership package of Democratic legislative priorities for the 109th Congress. There is nothing more fundamental to the vitality and endurance of a democracy of the people, by people, and for the people, than the people's right to vote. In the words of Thomas Paine:

The right of voting for representatives is the primary right by which other rights are protected.

With regard to the Iraqi elections, President Bush has made his goal for this initial act of democracy clear: he wants as full participation in the vote as possible. In his words, he wants "everybody to vote." While that is a laudable goal for a fledgling democracy, it should be the standard for a democracy that has existed for nearly two and one-quarter centuries. Regrettably, we have not yet reached that standard. In the 2000 presidential election, 51.2 percent of the eligible American electorate voted. And although in the 2004 presidential election voting participation reached its highest level since 1968, still, only 60.7 percent of the eligible Americans voted.

While there are many reasons why "everybody" does not vote in America, we learned from the 2000 presidential elections that many citizens cannot vote and have their vote counted because they are improperly removed from registration rolls, do not have access to accessible voting systems and ballots, and lack confidence in antiquated and error-prone machines and State administrative procedures. In response to those concerns, Congress enacted overwhelmingly bipartisan legislation—the Help America Vote Act of 2002, or HAVA. For the first time in our history, that landmark legislation established the role of the Federal Government in administering and funding Federal elections. The twin goals of this act are to make it easier to vote and harder to defraud the system.

On the day that the Senate adopted its version of HAVA, I noted that the Senate bill was a bipartisan compromise and the culmination of the hard work of a dedicated group of Senators, including my distinguished colleagues, Senator MCCONNELL and Senator BOND, and others. But I also noted that the compromise was just that—it was not everything that all of us wanted, but it was something that everyone wanted. That was equally true of the final HAVA compromise on election reform.